

*Employment Support Bill*

trying to answer the points he made. If I understood him well, and I hope that I am quoting him correctly, since I resented it very much yesterday, and *Hansard* proved me right, when the hon. member's leader misquoted me considerably last night and I should not like to do the same thing to him today. He said that he thought only 150 companies would stand to benefit from this bill. That is not right. I think my hon. friend was impressed by what I said in my first speech on the subject, as reported in *Hansard* at page 7558. I said:

The survey conducted by my department also indicates that there are some 150 companies which would have difficulty surviving if the surcharge lasted up to a year,—

That was an assessment of potential damage and not an assessment of how many companies would stand to benefit from the bill. This is a very important distinction. As a matter of fact, we questioned 1,700-odd companies, as mentioned at page 7558 of *Hansard*. The opinion of my department at this time is that about 300 of that number are exporting more than the 20 per cent of their production which they need to export in order to qualify for assistance under the bill. That means that about 300 plants will stand to benefit from this bill. I emphasize again that clause 15 covers hardship cases. It may well be that some companies exporting 12 per cent, 13 per cent or 15 per cent will still have their cases judged in the light of that clause. So much for that point.

The hon. member is also worried that small companies might not benefit from this bill as much as bigger ones would. I want to repeat what was said in committee. I know that there was a bit of "wobbling"—that is the only word which comes to my mind at this time. The final undertaking in committee is very clear. There is no distinction as to the size of the plants. The only factor is that employment in the plant must be "significantly" affected by the surcharge. This may involve a labour force of 2,000 or a labour force of 10. Two or three employees out of 10 could mean "significantly" affected. The size of the company is not a relative factor in the implementation of this bill. It is certainly not to be considered in the way the member thought it might.

• (5:20 p.m.)

The hon. member made a good point. He said he was afraid that unions might create some difficulty. I am sure that the member supports me in the hope that unions will also show some flexibility in these matters. If everyone is going to stand on his rights, on the conventions and practices of former years, of course there will be added difficulties. However, I hope that company officials and union leaders will show intelligence in helping to implement this bill.

The hon. member also stated that companies might use this assistance to stockpile. I already indicated, and I repeat, that this is one of the five, six or seven possibilities offered by this bill. A moment ago my parliamentary secretary stated very strongly that continuation of exports is but one of seven or eight different possibilities and that stockpiling or adding to inventories is one of those. The member was wrong when he said the government was favouring that direction. I do not think it was just eloquence when he said that under this bill the government might be paying "two thirds of the cost of units". That is

not the case. The assistance which will be provided will be two thirds of the surtax applicable to goods exported to the United States in 1970. I am not going to go into detail. It will be two thirds of the surtax that would have been paid, not two thirds of the cost of units. If the government had decided on that, it would indeed have meant fantastic support. I presume that the member inadvertently made that suggestion.

I think I have covered most of what I intended to deal with, Mr. Speaker. I hope I will have the pleasure of receiving a telephone call from you tonight in Houston, Texas, Mr. Speaker, or from someone on the government side, informing me that the bill has been passed and that the two reluctant parties, the New Democratic Party and the Ralliement des Cr ditistes, have surprised everyone by showing intelligence, flexibility, goodwill by voting in favour of this bill, thus giving occasional—I do not mind if it is occasional—support to the government when a question of national importance arises.

**Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, I was very impressed with the minister's speech. I am extremely sorry he has to leave us now in order to go to Houston. I have been there, so I am sure he will have a marvellous time. I am not trying to be facetious, as I know that this is impossible, but perhaps the minister can drop in on Washington to let them know about the unknown country. The minister stated that if we pass this bill, it will show how we are going to deal with two specific problems, the loss of contracts and the economic difficulty which Canadians and Canadian industry will face as the result of the 10 per cent surtax.

I wish to point out to the minister that I am quite aware of what the Americans are doing. We cannot really fault them. They are attempting to bring some economic stability to their own country. At the same time, however, I wonder whether they know who we are. The minister has an opportunity of going to the United States. Perhaps he can add another paragraph to the speech that has been prepared, and I do not fault that, and give some information about this country which even President Nixon does not know. I refer the minister to a press release relating to a presidential press conference issued by the United States Information Services datelined Washington, September 16. In this the president gives some indication as to who his friends are, who are the important trading partners and what importance he places upon these respective parties. On Saturday, September 25, 1971, the *Globe and Mail* picked up this theme. I quote from the report of the press conference:

This is a time for our friends around the world—and they are all competitors—to build a new system with which we can live so that we don't have another crisis in a year. With regard to the Japanese, incidentally, I think I can best summarize our dilemma in this way: After the Japanese were here I found that, both from the information they gave and the information we had ourselves, that Japan is our biggest customer in the world and we are their biggest customer in the world.

That is the part with which I find some fault, Mr. Speaker. I can give the minister a copy of the *Globe and Mail* lead editorial of Saturday, September 25, 1971, in which they took issue with that statement. I quote from the editorial:

The New York Times, which is respected for its paper-of-record